



SENATOR RUNNER'S WEEK IN REVIEW

A WEEKLY REVIEW THAT WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE



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Infrastructure Bond Update

In January, the Governor in his State of the State Address laid a general plan for investing in California's crumbling infrastructure. There is little doubt that there are serious infrastructure needs that have been overlooked over the past two decades of record population growth.

With the overwhelming need for infrastructure investment, it is critical to establish realistic priorities. Top funding priority must go to revitalization of the state highway system, goods movement programs, expansion of California's water storage system, flood control, and other infrastructure programs. It is also important to adopt reforms to eliminate bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies in order to use any infrastructure investment to its fullest potential.

News of the Week

[Bond Proposal Will Not be on June Ballot, Negotiations to Continue for November Ballot](#)

[Bonds Negotiation Fizzled](#)

[No Challenges for Antelope Valley Judges](#)

[Fragile Levees Imperil Delta](#)

[High Desert Corridor: Some Say New Road Could Provide Quicker Access to Merchants](#)

[Widening Highway 118 in Ventura County](#)

[Reiner in Hot Water Over How He Spent Taxpayer Money](#)

[State Sanctions Two Local Schools](#)

Infrastructure Needs

Roads and highways: The California Transportation Commission estimates a total unmet funding need of approximately \$125 billion, as of the end of 2004. Of this amount, the total unmet funding need for highways alone is approximately \$54 billion, or \$5.4 billion annualized over a 10-year period.

Ports: The Governor's Goods Movement Action Plan estimates a funding need of approximately \$47 billion for infrastructure and between \$2 billion and \$5 billion for air emission projects.

Levees and flood control: Early estimates from the Department of Water Resources indicate a minimum funding need of \$2 billion in one-time expenditures and approximately \$100 million annually for on-going maintenance.

Water infrastructure: Preliminary estimates indicate a need for upwards of \$15 billion over the next 20 years for water storage, conveyance, conservation, and the associated environmental mitigation requirements.

Only after California's critical infrastructure needs are met should California consider funding other programs through interest bearing bonds.

Latest Bond Negotiations

Unfortunately, this past week's bond proposals did not come close to meeting these unmet needs. The majority party instead saw the infrastructure bond proposal as an opportunity to load up with their pet projects and social-engineering programs. This feeding frenzy did not focus on long-term investment or critical reforms needed to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

It was loaded up with items like \$100 million for soccer fields, \$200 million for replacing school buses, \$50 million to determine the safest routes to schools, \$500 million for a transit security program, \$1 billion for port air quality, to name a few. These projects may have some merit but none of these projects is a long-term infrastructure investment. The bond was also filled with hundreds of millions of pork projects that had very little to do with infrastructure.

Even in the items of transportation, there was significantly less emphasis on building and maintaining roads. Funding went to studies and delays instead of bricks and mortar. There were also no reforms to build roads faster by allowing Cal-Trans to use design-sequencing and design-build, instead it maintained the current system which unnecessarily wastes money through bureaucratic delays.

There was little funding to secure our levees which are desperately needed to ensure California will not endure a fate similar to New Orleans. Even one Northern California Senator Sam Aanstad stated during the Senate Floor debate that there is more money in this bond for outhouses in state parks than restoring levees in California.

This bond proposal was quickly dismissed because of the majority party's refusal to seriously invest in our infrastructure in a responsible way.

Later in the week, there was a last ditch effort to pass at least an emergency levee bond and a school bond, but the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Pro Tem could not come to any agreement.

Where does this leave us? It means back to negotiations in order to put together a responsible infrastructure package for the November ballot.

It is critical that we do not settle for anything less than a long-term investment in our roads and highways, goods movement programs, expansion of California's water storage system, and flood control coupled with common sense reforms that will eliminate bureaucratic costly delays.

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